ABSTRACT

A method (10, 20) and apparatus (30) enables a customer (47) to distinguish between a dead or broken Internet Protocol telephone line and an out-of-service Internet Protocol telephone line. The method detects (11) a hook status of a device (46) coupled to the IP network (33) during an out-of-service status of the line. Upon detection of a change in state from an on-hook state to an off-hook state, a message is sent (13) to the device (46) indicating that the IP telephone line is currently out-of-service and not dead or broken. This message can be a voice or text message. Moreover, the message can provide status information for all of the interfaces of the device coupled to the IP telephone line. In addition, the message can include information as to how to obtain service, such as a telephone number to call.